

Employment Consultant interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Employment Consultants focus on your ability to build rapport with job seekers, manage a caseload and work with employers to create opportunities. Expect questions that test your empathy, resilience, compliance knowledge and practical problem solving.

- **Process and compliance:** How you assess clients, develop job plans, use systems like the Workforce Australia Portal and Employment Services System, and meet reporting requirements.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of supporting clients through setbacks, managing difficult conversations and working with employers.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations such as a client who is disengaged, an employer with concerns about a candidate, or a conflict between targets and quality support.
- **Client-facing and interpersonal:** How you build trust with people from diverse backgrounds, including clients with disability, mental health conditions or limited English.
- **Motivation and fit:** Why you want to work in employment services, how you handle the emotional demands of the role and what keeps you motivated.

Typically you will have a phone screen with a recruitment officer or team leader, then a face-to-face or video interview with a panel of two or three people, often including a hiring manager and a senior consultant. The interview usually runs for 45 to 60 minutes and may include a practical exercise such as reviewing a sample job plan or role-playing a client consultation. Some employers ask you to complete a short written task or a work health and safety and privacy quiz.

1. Walk me through how you assess a new client's barriers to employment and develop a job search plan.

Why they ask

This tests your casework process, your ability to identify barriers and your knowledge of job planning in a government-funded program.

How to structure your answer

Use a clear walk-through structure: context, steps in order, how you involve the client, and the outcome. Mention any systems or tools you use.

Example answer

"When I meet a new client, I start by explaining the program and building rapport. I ask about their work history, skills, health, transport, caring responsibilities and any previous training. I listen for barriers they might not name directly, such as low confidence or a lack of recent local experience. Then I work with them to set short term and long term goals. For example, if they want to work in retail but have not interviewed for years, we might start with a resume update, then a practice interview, then apply for three suitable local vacancies. I record everything in the Employment Services System and set a review date. The plan is a living document, so we adjust it as their circumstances change."

2. Tell me about a time you helped a job seeker who was struggling to stay motivated.

Why they ask

This looks at your empathy, persistence and ability to support clients through setbacks using a real example.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result. Focus on what you said and did, and how the client responded.

Example answer

"I had a client who had applied for many jobs without success and was close to giving up. He would miss appointments and seemed angry. I sat down with him and acknowledged how frustrating it was. I asked what kind of work he actually wanted, rather than what he thought he should apply for. He mentioned he enjoyed fixing bicycles. We looked at local bike shops and a warehouse role that involved assembling bikes. I helped him tailor his resume to highlight that interest and we did a practice interview. He got the warehouse job and later told me he was enjoying the hands-on work. I checked in weekly for the first month to help him settle in."

3. A local employer is reluctant to take on a client with a disclosed mental health condition. How would you handle that?

Why they ask

This scenario tests your employer liaison skills, your understanding of workplace adjustments and your ability to advocate without being pushy.

How to structure your answer

Use a judgement under pressure structure: pause and acknowledge the employer's concern, clarify the facts, offer practical support, and know when to escalate or walk away.

Example answer

"First I would thank the employer for being honest and ask what specifically concerns them. Often it is about unknown costs, safety or team dynamics. I would explain that many people with mental health conditions work successfully with simple adjustments, such as flexible start times or a quiet space for breaks. I would offer to stay involved through post-placement support and remind them of wage subsidies or other practical help if relevant. I would not disclose more about the client than necessary. If the employer still refused, I would respect their decision but keep them in mind for other candidates, and I would work with the client to find a more inclusive employer. I would also record the conversation and follow our anti-discrimination policy."

4. How do you balance meeting placement targets with providing genuine, ongoing support?

Why they ask

This probes your professional judgement and your ability to manage the tension between outcomes and quality support.

How to structure your answer

Use a balanced argument structure: acknowledge the targets, explain your approach to sustainable placements, and give an example of how you avoid quick fixes.

Example answer

"I see targets as a useful guide, but not at the expense of the client. A placement that falls over in two weeks helps no one, so I focus on matching the person to the role and preparing them well. I also stay in touch after placement through post-placement support, which often prevents small issues from becoming big ones. In practice this means I might spend extra time with a client who needs interview practice or help with transport, because that work usually leads to a better outcome. I keep my job plans and case notes up to date so my manager can see the progress even when a placement takes a little longer."

5. Describe your experience using the Workforce Australia Portal and Employment Services System for case notes and compliance.

Why they ask

This is a technical question to check your familiarity with the systems and your attention to compliance and privacy.

How to structure your answer

Use a straightforward technical walk-through: name the systems, describe what you use them for, and show you understand compliance.

Example answer

"I use the Workforce Australia Portal daily to check vacancies, refer clients and record job search efforts. In the Employment Services System, I maintain job plans, case notes and post-placement support records. I am careful to write clear, factual notes that meet privacy requirements and can be understood by anyone reviewing the file. I also set reminders for compliance tasks such as reviews and job plan updates, so nothing is missed. When I started, I completed the department's online training and I keep up with changes through internal updates and team meetings."

6. Give an example of a time you had to deliver difficult news to a client who was not successful in a job application.

Why they ask

This tests your empathy, communication skills and resilience, and how you keep clients engaged after rejection.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR with a strong focus on the action and the client's reaction. Show how you turned the conversation into a constructive next step.

Example answer

"A client had a second interview for a reception role she really wanted. She called me excited, but later the employer told me she had missed out. I invited her in for a coffee and told her in person. She was upset and said there was no point trying. I let her talk for a while, then we looked at the feedback together: she had great customer service but needed more confidence with computer systems. We booked her into a short computer course and updated her resume to highlight her willingness to learn. Two months later she got a similar role at a medical clinic. I kept in touch through the course so she knew I was still on her side."